



News Release

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West Nile Virus; Don't Let Your Guard Down!

From Dusk to Dawn, Put your DEET on!

(Salt Lake City, UT) - Just because the temperatures are starting to cool down, it doesn't mean the risk of West Nile virus has disappeared. Mosquitoes that carry West Nile virus (WNV) are still in Utah and active. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) continues to urge Utahns to Fight the Bite by wearing DEET while outdoors from dusk to dawn.

Labor Day weekend is almost here, the traditional last weekend of "summer." It's the time when friends and family generally gather and spend time outdoors whether you stay home for a backyard picnic or travel to outdoor fun spots. Many Utahns have been vigilant about protecting themselves and their families from WNV by using insect repellants containing DEET and covering up.

"West Nile virus has been kept at bay due to the public heeding the advice of the statewide public education campaign and the outstanding efforts of the Mosquito Abatement districts," said Lewis Garrett, Director, Davis County Health Department. "Now is not the time to let your guard down." Thousands of hours have gone into educating Utahns about the importance of prevention. These activities include the Fight the Bite mass media campaign, retailer promotions for purchase of DEET products, billboards, posters, fliers, presentations and news events.

So far this year in Utah, West Nile virus has been detected in 6 humans, 3 horses, 52 mosquito batches, 1 dead bird, 1 live bird, and 7 sentinel chickens. The concern remains that states surrounding Utah continue to have increasing cases and deaths:

- Arizona 318 cases and 4 deaths
- Colorado 141 cases and 4 deaths
- New Mexico 37 cases and 1 death
- Nevada 25 cases
- Wyoming 5 cases.

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Utah public health officials remind Utahns that Labor Day is not the end of the WNV risk season. Opportunities to be outdoors continue and may increase for some as the temperatures cool. With the days getting shorter more of the time outdoors will occur between dusk and dawn. "We know the virus is circulating in birds and mosquitoes so the risk to humans and horses continues," said Dr. Robert Rolfs, State Epidemiologist, UDOH

So remember to use repellants with DEET and wear long pants and long sleeves when walking to school, attending sporting events, exercising, gathering the harvest, and cleaning up the yard. Keep up the good work and continue to Fight the Bite!

For more information, call your local health department or the UDOH's Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542. For up-to-date information on the spread of West Nile virus in Utah, please visit www.health.utah.gov/wnv. For more information, see the attached prevention Fight the Bite fact sheet.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.